

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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May 20, 2003

FROM: RUDY LOPEZ, Director
Department of Behavioral Health

**SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS WITH TRUST V. HF, M.D., JEREMIAH
UMAKANTHAN, M.D. AND JOHN S. WELLS, M.D.**

RECOMMENDATION: Approve employment contracts with the following physicians for psychiatric services in the amount of \$1,397,302 for the period July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005:

Contract No.	Contractor	Job Title	Amount
	Trust V. HF, M. D.	Contract Child Psychiatrist	\$522,286
	Jeremiah Umakanthan, M. D	Contract Board Certified Adult Psychiatrist	\$494,574
	John S. Wells, M. D.	Contract Board Certified Adult Psychiatrist	\$380,442
Total			\$1,397,302

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Approval of this item will allow the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to enter into agreements with Drs. HF, Umakanthan, and Wells for provision of psychiatric services to accommodate clients in the West Valley Detention Center, central and east regions, and the high desert region of San Bernardino County.

DBH requires the services of specialized medical personnel for the treatment of mentally ill adults and children. Psychiatrists and physicians are needed to provide mental health services at DBH clinics and Institutes of Mental Disease. Due to a severe shortage of qualified physicians and psychiatrists available to provide these services, recruiting and retaining physicians is extremely competitive. The mental health services provided to residents of the County are enhanced by the expertise of contracted physicians.

DBH advertised for the position of Psychiatrist in Psychiatric News and Psychiatric Times. Of the thirty applications received in FY 2002/03, thirteen physicians have accepted contract terms and conditions offered by DBH. The Board has approved twelve of these employment contracts. The thirteenth agreement, Dr. HF's, is being brought forward with this item. In addition to addressing the chronic shortage of qualified physicians and psychiatrists, these thirteen physicians are being used to fill service vacancies created by departing physicians.

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Dr. Trust HF has been screened and interviewed by two Regional Medical Directors and one DBH Regional Deputy Director. He will be filling a vacant position in the proposed FY 2003/04 budget. Dr. HF will provide services in the central and east valley regions of the County. His hourly rate of \$90.72 is the standard rate offered by DBH to psychiatrists serving children as of the agreement commencement date.

Drs. Umakanthan and Wells are current DBH contractors whose agreements are being renewed. Dr. Umakanthan currently works in Jail Services in the West Valley Detention Center and receives an hourly rate of \$87.57, which is the standard rate offered by DBH to board certified psychiatrists serving adults. Dr. Wells is currently providing services in the Barstow Counseling and Mental Health Center, Victor Valley Behavioral Resource Center and Main Street Hesperia Clinic and receives an hourly rate of \$87.57, which is the standard rate offered by DBH to board certified psychiatrists serving adults. Although their hourly rates are the same, Dr. Umakanthan works more hours than Dr. Wells based on clinic needs and contractor availability. This difference is reflected in the total agreement amounts.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: These employment agreements have been reviewed and approved as to form by Deputy County Counsel, Charles J. Larkin on May 7, 2003. This item has been reviewed by the County Administrative Office, Carol Hughes, Administrative Analyst on May 12, 2003.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The total cost for these agreements is not to exceed \$1,397,302 for the period July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005. The annual costs of the agreements are as follows: \$688,108 for FY 2003/04, and \$709,194 for FY 2004/05.

The individual contract amounts represent maximum potential utilization. The amount of actual psychiatric services used is based upon budgeted clinic physician hours. This allows the flexibility to cover needed physician services within the overall budget for physician salary and benefit costs for each fiscal year. (For FY 2003/04, the total budgeted appropriations for contract physician salaries and benefits is \$4,413,973.) The second year of the agreement includes a 3.0% cost of living increase commensurate with the salary increases granted to County employees. The estimated annual utilization for the subsequent fiscal year will be included in the Department's FY 2004/05 budget request. All physician agreements are funded through a combination of insurance reimbursements, Medi-Care, Med-Cal, and State Realignment funds.

COST REDUCTION REVIEW: The County Administrative Office has reviewed this agenda item and recommends approval based on the need to provide specialized service to County residents. Approval will result in no local cost to the County.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S): All

PRESENTER: Rudy Lopez, Director
 (909) 387-7024